



WISCONSIN WELLHEAD PROTECTION NEWS

Spring 2002



HAPPY SPRING!

Spring is here. It's time to get outside and enjoy Wisconsin's abundant water resources. It's also time to celebrate Drinking Water and Groundwater Awareness Week. This issue contains ideas for promoting this week as well as congratulations to wellhead protection communities, a report on a recent series of workshops for teachers to learn about using the groundwater model, an update on Wisconsin's source water assessment efforts, information to assist with comprehensive planning, and a heads up on two initiatives with groundwater protection implications.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations are in order for a number of communities who are or have been involved in wellhead protection (WHP) planning to protect their water supply wells. Blue Mounds, Crivitz, Granton, Melrose, Nichols, Star Prairie and Webster have worked or are working with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) or Wisconsin Rural Water Association staff on wellhead protection plans, ordinances or both. You are commended for being proactive in protecting your water supply.

Communities which have developed wellhead protection plans for new wells since the last newsletter include Clinton, Ho Chunk Casino and Village, Curtiss, Holmen, Kewaskum, Mukwonago and Owen. Hats off to these communities as well for recognizing the importance of wellhead protection. Keep up the good work!

The DNR's wellhead protection website has added a site listing those communities who have adopted a plan for at least one of their wells. Check out the website at

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/dwg/gw/WI-WHP-Communities.pdf.

If you would like assistance from the Department in getting started, three DNR staff are available. Dave Johnson (608-261-6421 or johnsdm@dnr.state.wi.us) works with northeast and south central Wisconsin communities. Dave Lindorff works with communities in the southeast part of the state. Randell Clark (608-267-7895 or clarkr@dnr.state.wi.us) works with communities in west, central and northern Wisconsin. All three have the same address and fax number (see below).

If you have ideas regarding topics or questions that could be addressed in future newsletters, contact me by phone (877-268-9355 toll free), by fax (608-267-7650), by email (lindod@dnr.state.wi.us) or regular mail (Wisconsin DNR, P. O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921).

Dave Lindorff, Editor

CELEBRATE DRINKING WATER WEEK MAY 5-11!

It's time to promote our valuable drinking water resources again. Drinking Water and Groundwater Awareness Week is coming May 5-11. Please take the time to let others know about this valuable resource and the need to protect it. Here are some ideas for doing that.

- Have an open house at your water utility.
- Volunteer to talk to school children about where their water comes from and the importance of protecting their drinking water.
- Promote the Consumer Confidence Report in the media.
- Explore the resources available to help communities learn about groundwater, including the WDNR (www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/dwg/index.htm), the Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center (www.uwsp.edu/cnr/groundwater/), the Portage County website (www.uwsp.edu/water/portage), the Groundwater Guardian program (see below), local colleges or universities, water utilities, and environmental consultants, among others.
- Invite a local expert to come talk at a public meeting about groundwater conditions in your area. Show the 16-minute DNR video, "Wellhead Protection – An Ounce of Prevention" available from Dave Lindorff.
- Begin planning for your long-term water supply needs through wellhead protection and comprehensive planning.
- Promote wise use of water.
- Check with your local schools to see if they have the DNR's Groundwater Study Guide which contains a wide variety of groundwater activities. The packet is free by contacting Becky Olson-Pottratz at 608-266-2172 or pottr@dnr.state.wi.us.
- Promote a resolution by the local government proclaiming May 5-11 as Drinking Water and Groundwater Awareness Week.
- Talk to Denise Kilkenny-Tittle (715-346-2722 or by email at denise.kilkenny-tittle@uwsp.edu) about forming a Groundwater Guardian committee in your community. Visit the Wisconsin Groundwater Guardian website at www.uwsp.edu/cnr/gwguardian.

Here's a chance to celebrate how blessed we are with abundant groundwater resources.

GROUNDWATER TEACHER TRAINING A SUCCESS

In February, 48 teachers from twenty-four Wisconsin school districts received intensive training about the state's groundwater supplies and took home a free groundwater flow model to help their students learn about this precious natural resource and how to protect it.

Teachers, who were chosen through a screening process to attend the training, came from Alma, Ashland, Baldwin, Chippewa Falls, Colby,

Coleman, Cumberland, Denmark, Glenwood City, Green Lake, Kimberly, LaCrosse, Ladysmith, Marinette, Menomonie, Oconto Falls, Pepin, Phillips, Prescott, Princeton, Spring Green, Superior, and Watertown.

Staff from the Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center at UW-Stevens Point and the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey provided the training to teachers in separate workshops February 5 and 6 near Eau Claire and February 12 in Green Bay. The sand tank groundwater models, assembled by UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources students, cost \$350. The DNR paid for the models with a portion of wellhead protection funds from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. By educating students and parents about groundwater, it is hoped that communities will be able to make more informed decisions about protecting their water supply. This is the second year that these workshops were offered.

Besides the schools which now have groundwater models, the DNR has developed a list of locations from which a groundwater model can be borrowed. Contact Dave Lindorff for a copy of the list or check it out at:

www.uwsp.edu/water/portage/teach/borrow.htm

NEW FACE AT WISCONSIN RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

As noted in the last newsletter, Ed Morse has been hired by the Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA) to work with small communities (less than 10,000) on wellhead protection planning. Ed works out of his Lake Mills home and can be reached at 920-648-7578 or edmorse@charter.net. Ed has been working with WDNR staff to coordinate our wellhead protection efforts in Wisconsin.

CHANGES TO NR 811

For those of you who use Administrative Code NR 811, you should be aware that there have been some minor changes in the code language relating to the separation distances in section NR 811.16(4)(d) and in the requirements for a wellhead protection plan. These changes were made in revisions dated December 2000 and October 2001. The December 2000 changes, which became effective January 1, 2001, amended sections NR 811.16(4)(d) 2, 3 and 5. The only changes in the October 2001 version are to NR 811.16 (4) (d) 6 and NR 811.16 (5) (d). You can view the latest version of the rule at the Revisor of Statutes' web site (www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code), typing "ch. nr 811" and clicking "Go".

SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Progress continues on completing the source water assessment program (SWAP) as required by the 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments. The following four components must be completed for all public systems by May 2003.

Delineate Source Water Areas

Regional hydrogeologic studies to delineate source water areas for municipal systems have been completed in Dane, Sauk, Eau Claire, and Rock Counties and the Lower Fox River Valley. Studies in Pierce, St. Croix, La Crosse, Fond du Lac Counties, the SEWRPC counties, and the Central Sands Area are scheduled to be completed this year. A hydrogeologic mapping approach has been used to delineate source water areas in karst areas of Monroe, Columbia, Dodge and Jefferson Counties. The results of this project will be evaluated for practical usefulness before going further with this idea. Other systems will have their source water areas delineated using calculated radius or fixed radius methods.

Locate Potential Contaminant Sources

DNR staff are mapping locations of over fifty different types of potential contaminant sources including leaking underground storage tanks, septic systems and landfills. This data will be used to determine source water susceptibility and future monitoring requirements.

Determine Susceptibility

The susceptibility of groundwater systems will be determined by looking at proximity to potential contaminant sources, well construction, geology, raw water quality, and other factors. The DNR is developing a computer application that will automate large portions of the assessment process. The application will access information in the Drinking Water System and other DNR databases.

Complete and publicize assessments

Source water assessments will be sent to each public water system in the state. We are exploring ways of presenting the results of the finished assessments on the Internet.

Contact Jeff Helmuth, Source Water Protection Team Leader, at 608-266-5234 or helmuj@dnr.state.wi.us if you have questions about Wisconsin's SWAP.



PLANNING FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

As communities begin to wrestle with how to develop a comprehensive plan, some guidance documents are being developed to assist communities in this effort. The most recent guidance document is called "Planning for Natural Resources", published in January by the WDNR and the University of Wisconsin Extension. The purpose of the document is not just to address one of the nine elements of a comprehensive plan, but to help communities integrate natural resources information, including groundwater, into their planning process. Natural resources information is important for many of the nine elements of a comprehensive plan.

"Planning for Natural Resources" is available for downloading on the WDNR's Land Use site, at http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/es/science/landuse/smart_growth/index.htm#planbook.

It is also available from County Extension offices, and from Department of Administration's Office of Land Information Services (OLIS). OLIS (608-267-2707 or www.doa.state.wi.us/olis/) also has information on other guidance documents also.

As noted in the last newsletter, WDNR and other state agency staff are developing a series of fact sheets to assist communities in pulling together and evaluating groundwater and drinking water information for the natural resources element and the other elements as well. Fact sheets are nearly done addressing (1) the relationship between groundwater and the elements of a comprehensive plan, (2) resources for gathering information on groundwater conditions, and (3) hydrologic considerations relating to residential development. Other fact sheets are being considered. If you have ideas for topics or information that could be included in a groundwater or wellhead protection fact sheet or want to check the status of the fact sheets, please contact Dave Lindorff.

GROUNDWATER SUMMIT/WATERS OF WISCONSIN

You may want to keep track of two other initiatives that may have implications for local groundwater protection and planning. This past October 30th, 135 persons representing over 50 agencies, organizations, and local governments met at a Groundwater Summit to discuss future directions for groundwater protection. After a series of morning presentations which provided an overview of groundwater conditions and issues, the afternoon was spent in break out sessions to identify priorities for action. Some of the themes that emerged from the breakout sessions included – development of a

groundwater quantity strategy, options for regional water management, groundwater protection through comprehensive (Smart Growth) planning, developing a constituency for groundwater protection, and groundwater-surface water connections. Work will continue this year on a number of products from the Summit and identification of an action plan. You can keep track of Groundwater Summit activity by visiting the Groundwater Coordinating Council website at www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/dwg/gcc/.

The Groundwater Summit effort ties in nicely with the Waters of Wisconsin initiative being led by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. The mission of this effort is to "examine and analyze the current state of Wisconsin's waters and recommend strategies to promote their long-term sustainability". This will culminate in a Waters of Wisconsin forum to be held October 21-22 at the Monona Terrace in Madison. This forum will be an opportunity to provide input on how to sustain our valuable waters. A final report will be one of the outcomes. Visit the Academy website at www.wisconsinacademy.org/programs/wisconsinidea.html for further information.

The Wisconsin Wellhead Protection Newsletter is a publication of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater. Its purpose is to provide current information on wellhead protection topics. It is published in the spring and fall and as needed.

Comments, questions, suggestions and articles are welcome and can be sent to: David Lindorff, Editor, Wisconsin Wellhead Protection Newsletter Department of Natural Resources, P. O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921
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